United Nations S/2000/1213

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 December 2000

Original: English

Letter dated 19 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a press statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia issued today, 19 December 2000, concerning the decision of the Government of Ethiopia to release Eritrean prisoners of war, starting with a first batch of 390 wounded Eritrean POWs (see annex). The release and repatriation of Eritrean POWs, which will be commencing immediately, testifies once again to the commitment of the Government of Ethiopia to the scrupulous and faithful implementation of the Peace Agreement concluded between Ethiopia and Eritrea on 12 December 2000.

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdulmejid **Hussein**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 19 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Press statement

19 December 2000

Ethiopia considers the Peace Agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea signed on 12 December in Algiers as a document which lays the basis for peace between the two countries. Accordingly, Ethiopia is committed to the scrupulous and faithful implementation of all the provisions of the Agreement.

It is in this spirit that the Government of Ethiopia has been carrying out intensive discussions with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) over the past few days on the speedy implementation of the provisions of the Agreement on the release and repatriation of prisoners of war. It is to be recalled that the Agreement also obliges the two parties to release and repatriate or return to their last place of residence all others detained as a result of the conflict.

As part of this discussion with ICRC on this important part of the Peace Agreement, the Government of Ethiopia has now come to a decision with regard to the speedy implementation of the above-mentioned humanitarian provisions of the Agreement. Accordingly, Ethiopia will, in fulfilment of its obligation under the Agreement, commence releasing Eritrean prisoners of war in the following days.

The first batch to be released will be wounded Eritrean POWs numbering close to 390. The process of implementation of the applicable provisions of the Agreement will continue step by step in coordination and cooperation with ICRC.

It would be the responsibility of ICRC to organize the necessary logistics involved in the release and repatriation of the prisoners of war. It is also the mandate of ICRC to carry out the necessary preparation to find out the wishes of individual prisoners of war through interviews. The Ethiopian Government is committed to facilitating all these for ICRC. Accordingly, it is the hope of the Ethiopian Government that with the cooperation of ICRC the release and repatriation of Eritrean POWs which will be commencing immediately will soon be completed in conformity with the letter and spirit of the Peace Agreement between the two countries.